

Democrats, and members on both sides of the aisle have often found themselves indebted to JOE MCDADE's highly effective legislative skills. A great many of us in this body have found him to be receptive to our needs and hard-working and dedicated in his efforts to see that important bills were successfully legislated.

He has clearly served the constituents of the 10th Congressional District of Pennsylvania with particular distinction, and in their gratitude for his leadership, they have returned him to the House time and again for a truly remarkable three and a half decades.

In all of his dealings with his colleagues, JOE's genial manner and Irish good humor has won him the warm friendship of members in both parties. May he be rewarded in his retirement with further challenging interests, insights and projects. Perhaps we can look forward to his producing a book or two, giving us his perspective on what has really happened on the Hill during this last turbulent one-third of a century, and offering some advice to all of us in our search for better and more effective legislation.

JOE's departure will clearly leave a void in this Congress, and we hope he will make a point of returning to visit the floor on many occasions so that his mere presence will remind us again that collegiality and hard work continue to be all important in this body.

JOE MCDADE, I rise with your fellow members in saluting you for your thirty-five years of real accomplishment and dedication in the service of your fellow Americans. You will remain an inspiration for those who will follow in your footsteps from the great state of Pennsylvania! We are more than confident you will find many more congenial friendships and rewarding opportunities throughout the coming salad days of your retirement. You will be missed! God bless!

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my colleagues from Pennsylvania, Mr. SHUSTER and Mr. MURTHA, for taking this Special Order tonight to honor one of my dearest friends, JOE MCDADE.

JOE has left his mark on this House in so many ways. As the Senior Republican in the House, he is a respected Statesman who is looked up to by so many of our junior members. His wise counsel and advice have helped maintain the decorum and traditions of this great deliberative body.

As the senior Republican on the Appropriations Committee, he has served with great distinction. I can think of no finer tribute to JOE than in this his final year, our nation will enjoy a federal budget surplus for the first time in a generation.

Finally, I want to thank JOE for his selfless service as a member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on National Security to provide for the needs of our men and women in uniform. His leadership and long hours of work have ensured that he will leave this House secure in the knowledge that our troops in the field, at sea, and in the air are the strongest, most prepared fighting force anywhere in the world.

In addition to his work to provide for the defense of our nation, he has also worked hard to defend our nation's great treasures which are our national parks and our environment. As Chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water, JOE has reached every corner of our nation to support

critical public works needs, and through his long service on the Interior Subcommittee, he has protected our public lands and rebuilt the decaying infrastructure of our National Park Service.

No where is JOE's work more evident than in the many large and small towns of Northeastern Pennsylvania. He has been a diligent public servant for young and old alike. He is revered by the veterans of his community and you cannot go far in the 10th Congressional District without seeing another sign of JOE's handiwork.

Mr. Speaker, JOE MCDADE has given this House and the people of our great nation 36 years of selfless service. JOE has been a revered colleague, and devoted member of the Appropriations Committee, and a warm personal friend. With his retirement, JOE will leave a great void in this House, but he also leaves those who follow him a lasting legacy of how one American can devote himself to service to this body and to our nation. JOE MCDADE has been a great American, a great colleague, and the greatest of friends. He will be missed by us all.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I think the outpouring that we have seen here tonight for JOE MCDADE shows how much we respect him, we admire him, and we love him. Godspeed to you, JOE MCDADE and Sarah and your family.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION WAIVING POINTS OF ORDER AGAINST CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 4104, TREASURY, AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1999

Mr. MCINNIS (during special order of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 105-761) on the resolution (H. Res. 563) waiving points of order against the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 4104) making appropriations for the Treasury Department, the United States Postal Service, the Executive Office of the President, and certain Independent Agencies, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1999, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE SIDNEY R. YATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. EVERETT). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I am here tonight to pay tribute to one of the most outstanding Members that the United States House of Representatives has ever had; that is SIDNEY R. YATES of the 9th Congressional District in the State of Illinois.

SID YATES is retiring this year after 48 years in the House of Representatives, 24 terms. It would be an even 50 years if he had not been selected by the Democratic Party of Illinois in 1962 to run against the then Republican leader

of the United States Senate Everett McKinley Dirksen.

In 1962, he ran against Dirksen in a very spirited hard-fought race, which he unfortunately, from our perspective, lost 53 to 47. For the 2 years he was gone from the House of Representatives, he served as the United States representative to the United Nations. He returned in 1964 to resume his influential position here in Congress.

SID YATES is the product of immigrant parents. His parents were born in Lithuania, and Sid was born here in this country shortly after his parents arrived. He also has 3 brothers that were born here in this country.

SID YATES has served on the Committee on Appropriations just about his entire career here in the House of Representatives. He also served on the Committee on Foreign Operations for many, many years. He has a law degree and a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago.

□ 1915

But besides pursuing those academic credits at the University of Chicago, SID YATES was an outstanding college basketball player. He was placed on the All Big 10 Team in his senior year, 1933, and he also was mentioned as an honorable all American candidate.

He did not shoot jump shots. He did not shoot set shots, but, believe it or not, he played center for the University of Chicago and had an excellent left-handed hook shot and an excellent right-handed hook shot.

SID has been the subcommittee chairman on the Subcommittee on Interior for over 20 years. He is now the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Interior. He is an individual that has fought for the environment his entire career here in the House of Representatives. He is a man who has been the chief supporter of the National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities. He has also been the chief supporter of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

But he has also been very, very practical. He is a man that has always seen to it that money has come back into the City of Chicago and the State of Illinois for very significant and important projects: The Illinois Deep Tunnel system, Chicago Wilderness Project, the Chicago Green Streets program, the Chicago Shoreline project, the Indiana Dune center, and Navy Pier.

It is only fitting and proper that a few days ago the United States House of Representatives renamed the auditors main building located at 2101 14th Street, S.W. in Washington, D.C. in honor of SIDNEY R. YATES.

Back in 1944, when Sid was 35 years of age, he joined the United States Navy and served from 1944 to 1946. When he came out of the Navy, he got himself involved in politics and, as I mentioned earlier, he was elected to the House of Representatives in the Harry Truman year of 1948.

Through all those years, SID has had very, very few difficult primary or general elections. But in 1990, he did have

what some people thought was going to be a strong challenge. He ran up against a young alderman in the City of Chicago who was independently wealthy, who was extremely well funded. And the newspapers in Chicago and some of the political pundits had great concern that SID YATES, after all these years in Congress, might go out a loser. But to the astonishment of many people who were not really that well informed, SID YATES won that primary with 70 percent of the vote. His opponent received only 27 percent of the vote.

I have a few other things to say here about SID YATES, but there is a gentleman who has now joined me on the floor, a colleague of SID YATES and a colleague of mine, Congressman DANNY DAVIS.

I yield to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS).

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI), my colleague, for first of all taking out this time to salute and honor a tremendous legislator, a tremendous American, a man whom I am proud to call a colleague, Mr. SIDNEY YATES. I thank the gentleman for yielding me the opportunity.

Mr. YATES has the honor, of course, of representing the 9th congressional district of Illinois and has represented the people of the 9th district since 1953, serving 24 terms in the House. Born the son of Jewish immigrants in 1909, Mr. YATES was born in Chicago, and I am proud to say that he was born in my district, the district that I currently serve. His family lived on Maxwell Street, but later moved to the Lakeview area.

Mr. YATES was educated in the Chicago public schools, attended college at the University of Chicago where he played on the basketball team. I am not sure that he slam dunked that often but occasionally I suspect that he could rise to the heights of the basket. But nevertheless, he received his law degree from the University of Chicago Law School.

During the past 48 years, Mr. YATES can claim a leadership role in many important efforts. Most notably, he has been the staunch backer of the NEA and is often credited for saving this valuable program. Arts funding and environmental protection are perhaps two of his highest priorities.

In addition to this, Mr. YATES has assisted projects such as Navy Pier in Chicago, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, defunding the School of the Americas, gaining citizenship rights for the Japanese in the United States after World War II, and the Chicago Transit Authority. I can think of no more spirited of an advocate for the people and their civil liberties than my good friend, SID YATES. If he gets behind an issue, he will fight for it until the end.

Mr. YATES has often been deemed by the press a Truman era liberal, an unapologetic liberal and the greatest

friend the arts have in America today. In 1973, Congressman Anunzio remarked, For in the Congress, he is the people's advocate, and his contributions have been positive and numerous. He has waged war against the common enemy: hunger, disease and apathy. He has helped relieve human suffering by devoting his energies to equal opportunity for employment, housing and education. He has encouraged the immigrants and the oppressed from other lands to migrate to America, the land of the free. He is a true liberal with his goals and sights high, but with his feet on the ground. He has vision and courage in abundance.

And so as SID YATES takes leave of 48 years of service in the House, I am proud to salute the honorable SIDNEY YATES. His voice is one of principle and honor. His vote has always been one of the people, and all of the people in the 7th congressional district in the State of Illinois commend, congratulate and salute him for his service.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for those fine words about SID YATES.

I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FOX).

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the leadership of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI) in taking out this time to salute Congressman SID YATES, a pioneer for the people, someone who is a true gentleman and has been an outstanding member. He let his actions speak for his district and for his country, and in every way he has shown what a great Congressman can be, what it means to be selfless, what it means to be a visionary, what it means to make a difference. So while he will be concluding his many terms here in Congress, his legacy will live on in all the people programs that he supported. He is someone who for many of us who are newer Members, he is someone who we have gone to for advice. He is someone who has captured our imagination and our spirit and someone who has set high goals for us to reach, and we hope to continue the fine association with him and wish him the best as he moves forward in his life.

Let me add, if I may, that at the same time we are going to be missing Congressman MCDADE of Pennsylvania, who has been the dean of our delegation and also a fighter for his constituents as subcommittee chair of the Committee on Appropriations, someone who has done great things to stop waste, cut taxes and fight for important programs that he and SID YATES together thought were important to the people. And so two great giants of the House, Congressman SID YATES and Congressman JOE MCDADE are individuals whose accomplishments are legion, Members who have given their whole professional life to this institution.

Because of their outstanding service, their States, Illinois and Pennsylvania, are stronger, and America has a record of accomplishment second to none.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for those words about Congressman YATES.

I yield to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LAHOOD).

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI) for setting aside this time to pay tribute and honor one of the most distinguished and longest-serving Members of this House of Representatives.

Even though I have only been here for two terms, I remember SID YATES very fondly because of the mark that he left on Illinois, because of the mark that he made in Illinois politics. He was in the House and actually ran for the United States Senate against a very distinguished Senator by the name of Senator Everett Dirksen. I think back in the days when SID ran for that position, he actually thought that he could beat Senator Dirksen. But given the kind of record that SID had even back then, he waged a very, very vigorous campaign and represented really, I think, the best of Illinois politics, because I know that he cares very deeply about issues that face Illinois and has been very strong on trying to solve problems on behalf of the State of Illinois.

He represents, I think, one of the prettiest parts of Illinois and one of the prettiest parts of the Chicago land area along the coast of Lake Shore Drive and commonly referred to as part of the Gold Coast of Chicago. I think that for the people that SID has represented, he will be long remembered, probably, as the Congressman for the arts.

Of all of the things that I think SID has accomplished here in the House, I think he will always be remembered for his very, very strong advocacy for the arts, for the humanities, and really trying to promote and encourage people in those areas, whether they be the arts or the humanities. I think in reality that is what his moniker will be.

He also is someone that any Member of our delegation could go to and speak to about any particular project or opportunity for funding for the State of Illinois. Whether it be in Central Illinois, which I represent, or Southern Illinois, it did not make any difference whether the Member was a Republican or a Democrat, SID would listen attentively, would pay attention, and then do his homework and do his work to accomplish whatever the Member needed for their part of the State, because as much as I know he loved his own district, he also loved the State of Illinois and would do anything he could to improve that part of Illinois that the Member had come to him and asked him about.

He will be sorely missed for our State on the Committee on Appropriations. He will be sorely missed by the people who represent the arts and humanities for his advocacy, and he will be missed by all of the House for his intelligence and his ability to really come to the floor and make a case for the important issues of the day or the important

issues before the Committee on Appropriations.

□ 1930

I am sorry SID is not here tonight, but in the remaining days that we have, I know that many of us will have an opportunity to bid him a fond farewell and thank him for the many, many things he has contributed to his own district, one of the most beautiful parts of Chicago, to the beautiful State of Illinois, and to our wonderful country. And on behalf of, I think, those in Illinois that are not represented by SID, in central or southern Illinois, we say, "Thank you for your stewardship and your service."

And I thank the gentleman for setting aside this time to honor a great American, a great Member of this body, SID YATES.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman very much. We appreciate the words the gentleman had to say about SID YATES, and I want to say to the gentleman that when he talked about SID YATES being a gentleman, he certainly is a gentleman. We could not find a finer gentleman in this body or, I believe, anywhere in this country. I think his character has always been beyond reproach and his integrity has been of the highest possible degree. And in this day and age, that is something we really have to salute and admire.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of this special order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GILCREST). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I yield to my colleague, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. JESSE JACKSON).

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. I thank the gentleman for yielding to me, and I rise today, Mr. Speaker, to pay tribute to a distinguished legislator, a paragon of virtue and a national treasure, Congressman SIDNEY YATES from my home State of Illinois.

I am deeply saddened that Mr. YATES will be leaving the House of Representatives at the end of this term. I join my colleagues in thanking this truly remarkable man for his invaluable contribution to this Nation.

Mr. YATES was first elected in 1948, and for 4 decades he has served as a member of the Committee on Appropriations. As the Member who coined the appropriations moniker, "College of Cardinals", he has spent 20 years as the chairman of the Subcommittee on Interior of the Committee on Appropriations and has been a staunch advocate for the arts and defender of the environment.

Mr. YATES embodies all that is just and virtuous about public service. Through his exemplary tenure, Sid

Yates has typified what it truly means to be called "the honorable".

Mr. YATES has been considerate to me, generous with his time, and extremely helpful to me as a new legislator. On December 14th, 1995, Mr. YATES introduced me, after I took the oath of office, and has continued to serve as a guide and a teacher. As the dean of the Illinois delegation, he has proved inspiring by his courageous and principled stands on issues and legislation, despite great pressures to do otherwise.

I believe I speak for everyone in this body by thanking him for his leadership, public service, experience and wisdom. I will miss my good friend and trusted mentor, and I wish him and his family the very best as they embark upon the next chapter of their lives.

I want to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RUSH), and certainly the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI), for being considerate enough to yield to me this time and for hosting this special order on behalf of Mr. YATES.

Mr. LIPINSKI. I thank the gentleman very much for those outstanding words about Sid Yates.

I was just thinking the other day that people have never talked about the Ninth Congressional District in the State of Illinois as anything other than the Yates district. Even when people were campaigning in the primary to succeed Congressman YATES, they never talked about running for the Ninth Congressional District, they talked about running for SID YATES' seat. And I believe that it will be thought of as SID YATES' seat for a long, long time into the future.

As I mentioned earlier, SID YATES is a man of the highest quality of character, the greatest integrity. He is a gentleman in the finest sense of the word. He never has a bad word to say about anyone. He has led many, many causes on this floor. He led them very strongly. He led them with a great deal of intellectual persuasion behind these causes. He never became upset with what other people had to say, even though, as time has gone on, some of the causes, some of the things that he championed may have had less and less support here in the House of Representatives.

As the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. JESSE JACKSON) just mentioned, and as the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) has mentioned, he never changed his position. He never changed his principles. You knew when you met SID YATES where he stood. We knew that when he spoke, he spoke directly, accurately, forcefully, and with the highest degree of integrity behind it.

There are many, many things that SID YATES has done for this country by being a Member of this body. He is retiring at the end of this term, but the accomplishments that he has had for this country will not only be remembered for many, many years in this

body but will be remembered by many people in this Nation. Because many of the things that he has done in the arts, in the humanities field, and in the environmental field are things that people know about, people appreciate, and people will always be happy that SID YATES was here for almost 50 years.

I would now like to conclude this special order by recognizing the Congressman from Indiana (Mr. PETER VISCLOSKEY).

Mr. VISCLOSKEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding and for setting aside this time to honor Mr. YATES.

I have kidded Mr. YATES in the past that one of the advantages he has over me is that during the summer months potentially half of his constituents tend to live in my Congressional District along the southern shore of Lake Michigan. But what I would like to remember about Mr. YATES tonight is not only the fact that he is a true gentleman, in every sense of the word, but as the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI) just pointed out, his unflinching devotion and energies to preserving the environment of the United States of America as well as this planet and, in particular, the closeness to which he held the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore to his heart, one of the great natural resources of this country.

I have a picture in my office of my son John when he was 8 years old, and he had a look of bliss on his face as he was jumping off a small bluff along the southern shore of Lake Michigan on the day a fence was torn down and the Dunes was expanded to include an area called Crescent Dune in the Michigan City area.

It was the last 36 acres of undeveloped property along the 45-mile southern lakeshore of Lake Michigan. And that property was included for future generations forevermore because of the strenuous efforts and commitments of SID YATES to the environment. It sat next to Mount Baldy, which was also included in the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, the highest geographic feature in Northern Indiana because of the efforts of Mr. YATES.

But most importantly, I think, there are now environmental education centers, campgrounds and other facilities. So that whether it is the young students of our area, whether middle-aged individuals or senior citizens who want to learn more about their surroundings and the environment, they are now able to do that because of the good works of Congressman YATES.

He is a gentleman in every sense of the word. He is dedicated to his family and to his country, and it has been a privilege for me to be able to serve with Mr. YATES for 14 years. And, again, I thank the gentleman very much for allowing me the opportunity to speak.

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Speaker, I salute my good friend and long-time colleague and political neighbor, SID YATES, as he comes to the end of a most remarkable career in the House of Representatives.

It was an incredible fifty years ago that SID first won his seat in Congress. I was a high school senior at the time, undecided about my future in the post World War II period.

Over the years since, both SID and I have worked hard together in support of numerous projects involving many issues for the betterment of Illinois citizens. And I must say that Chicagoans have long been appreciative of SID's remarkable ability as Chairman of the Interior Subcommittee on Appropriations to bring to the Windy City large allocations of funds for many important projects. Literally he has been able to win billions for the city and for Illinois in projects such as the Chicago Shoreline Project, the Navy Pier Restoration Project, the Indiana Dunes Land Acquisition Project, the Chicago Cultural Center—in addition to many specific public works projects of importance to Chicago.

Moreover, as one of this country's earliest environmentalists, SID YATES will be remembered fondly by many across the land as the prime mover in the creation of many national parks, as well as in the preservation of wildernesses, scenic rivers, seashore and lakeshore projects, for all Americans to enjoy. Each one of these projects stands as a testimony to SID's long dedication to keep America beautiful.

These are just some of the accomplishments of my good friend who has represented the Ninth District of Illinois so ably and for so many years. His record has continually won him the admiration of his Congressional colleagues, who will surely miss him in the years ahead.

Because we were of different political parties, SID and I have not always, of course, concurred on all the issues. Over the years, we have particularly had disagreement regarding the NEA. However, all of our exchanges of opinions on the floor have always been marked by cordiality and comity. Indeed I have always enjoyed our debates in the House chamber.

I rise with my fellow Illinois delegation members to salute SIDNEY YATES for his incomparable half-century of dedication and accomplishment in the halls of Congress—a most admirable record which should well serve as a model for new members as they arrive and take up their tasks in this hallowed House. We hope he will find time on occasion to grace the House floor with this presence, so that those of us who remain may be reminded that his many past examples of collegiality and hard work should still remain important to this body.

Mr. LIPINSKI. I thank the gentleman.

I would just like to say, in concluding this special order honoring SID YATES, that there has not been a finer Member of the House of Representatives in its history than SIDNEY R. YATES of Illinois.

WAIVING POINTS OF ORDER AGAINST CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 4104, TREASURY AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1999

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 563 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 563

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 4104) making appropriations for the Treasury Department, the United States Postal Service, the Executive Office of the President, and certain Independent Agencies, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1999, and for other purposes. All points of order against the conference report and against its consideration are waived. The conference report shall be considered as read.

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, for purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MOAKLEY), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

Mr. Speaker, the proposed rule for the conference report to accompany H.R. 4104, the Treasury, Postal Service and General Government Appropriations bill for the fiscal year 1999, waives all points of order against the conference report and against its consideration. The rule provides that the conference report will be considered as read.

Mr. Speaker, the underlying legislation, which makes the appropriations for the Treasury Department, the Postal Service, the Executive Office of the President, and certain independent agencies for the fiscal year 1999, is very, very important legislation. Nearly 90 percent of the activities funded under this bill are devoted to the salaries and expenses of approximately 163,000 employees who are responsible for administering programs such as drug interdiction, Presidential protection, violent crime reduction, and Federal financial management. I would encourage my colleagues to support the rule as well as the conference report.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I thank my dear friend, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. MCINNIS), for yielding me the customary half-hour.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my colleagues the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. KOLBE) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. STENY HOYER) for their very hard work on this bill and congratulate them on nearing the finish line.

This year's Treasury, Postal appropriations conference report provides \$13.44 billion, which is slightly more than last year's bill. This conference report will provide substantial funding for Federal law enforcement, the Customs Service, the United States Mint, the Secret Service, the General Services Administration and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. It is money that is much needed and will, to a large extent, be put to very good use.

It also fully funds the Office of the National Drug Control Czar, which is so critical to curbing the tide of illegal drugs that is still endangering our

country's economy and our constituents' safety.

Today's conference report also fixes the problem with pay for Federal fire fighters. And without this language, Mr. Speaker, Federal fire fighters would continue to be paid much less than their municipal and civil service counterparts.

After watching Federal, local and State fire fighters battling the huge fires of Florida and elsewhere, to the point of exhaustion, I can say without hesitation, Mr. Speaker, these people do deserve a raise. And if we cannot give them that, the very least we can do is make sure that all fire fighters are paid about the same money. They all risk their lives for our safety, whether the truck on which they ride has a State seal or a Federal seal. This bill will fix that inequality, which I am very happy to see.

But, Mr. Speaker, there are some more serious problems with this conference report, and one of the most troubling aspects of this bill is its provision which will basically fire the general counsel of the Federal Election Commission. It does so, Mr. Speaker, by imposing term limits, but the effect is to fire somebody who has been working very hard to protect the integrity of the American electoral process.

Mr. Speaker, I am sad to say that common wisdom is that this person is being fired because he investigated GOPAC and the Christian Coalition and, in doing so, has angered some very high ranking Republicans. I do not need to tell anybody here, Mr. Speaker, that the Treasury, Postal appropriations conference report is no place to exact political vengeance, particularly against someone who was only doing his job.

The Federal Election Commission is the agency that watches over elections. It polices Federal campaigns, making sure that candidates and interest groups are raising and spending money within the bounds of the law, regardless of which party they represent. The Federal Election Commission and its employees are charged with making sure that our campaigns are fair and that the American people are heard, and its employees should be protected from partisan attacks.

So a partisan firing of upper level staffers could have widespread ramifications for fair elections all across these United States, and I will oppose the bill for that reason.

Also, Mr. Speaker, two members of the other body feel so strongly about this issue that they have promised to filibuster if it is not resolved.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, this is the third rule which we have done for some version of this bill. And with every rule, my Republican colleagues promise to address the pending computer meltdown known as Y2K.

□ 1945

Well, here we are again, Mr. Speaker. It has been three months and still